

Central Coast Oak Mortality Survey – June, 2011

Background: Sudden oak death (SOD) was first detected in California in 1995. This disease, caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*, has since killed hundreds of thousands of oak and spread to 14 counties in California. Forest Health Protection (FHP) has conducted special flights to detect SOD via aerial surveys since 2001. San Luis Obispo and San Benito Counties on California's central coast remain uninfested despite having suitable habitat for SOD and proximity to infested counties.

Objective: Detect and map oak mortality in San Luis Obispo and San Benito Counties. Mapped mortality will be ground-checked for the presence of SOD.

Surveyors: Z. Heath, B. Oblinger and R. Noyes

Date: June 7th and 28th, 2011.

Methodology: Recently dead or injured trees (trees still retaining dead foliage) were mapped visually by surveyors using digital aerial sketch-mapping systems flying in a light fixed-wing aircraft approximately 1,000 feet above ground level. Photographs were also taken of the mapped trees to aid in ground visits. Mapped oak mortality will be ground checked by CalFire cooperators to determine the presence/absence of *P. ramorum*.

Details:

- About one million acres over San Benito and San Luis Obispo Counties were flown. Portions of the Los Padres National Forest was surveyed, as well as oak habitat on the Pinnacles National Monument. See Figure 1. The majority of area surveyed is under private ownership. See Figure 2.

- Six trees on six separate sites were mapped in San Luis Obispo County. None were mapped in San Benito County. Only one site was tanoak, the remainder were live oak. See Figure 3. In comparison, over 300 trees on almost 200 acres were mapped in Monterey County this year, a county known to have *P. ramorum*.

Figure 1. Flown area and mapped oak mortality

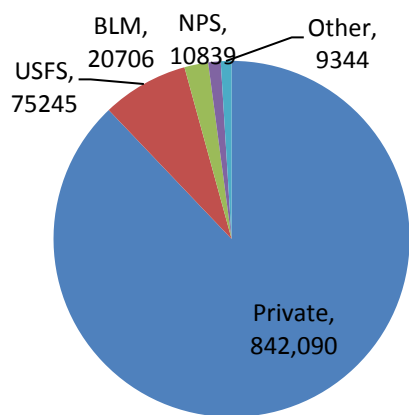


Figure 2. Surveyed ownership (acres)

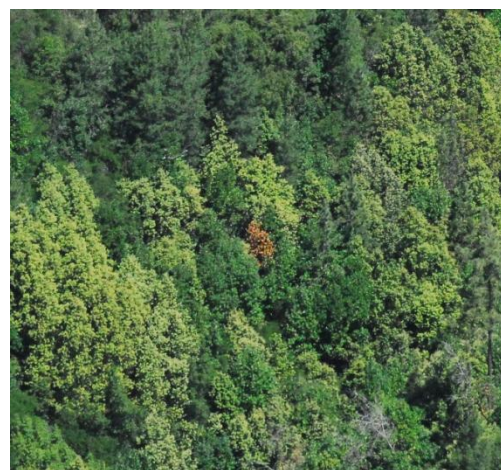


Figure 3. Recently dead tanoak near San Luis Obispo.

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